4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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the village to find dependent relatives—siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces— who, unable to make a go of it elsewhere, are accepted into a relative's family, sometimes to the extent of eventually taking over the headship of the family. Sometimes, on the initiative and invitation of an elderly or lonely relative, an entire nuclear family will be asked to take over or share a household. Children of poor or "inconvenienced" families (where a new child is born before the first is weaned, where there are too many children for the mother to handle comfortably, where a youngster is simply being "troublesome") are adopted or "borrowed" by other villagers for varying periods of time. This is done preferably by relatives, sometimes by neighbors, and often, in the case of boys, by the monastery, where the children become hand-servants to the monks and are supposed to absorb, by a kind of osmotic process, righteous ways of behaving. (Of my three male life history informants, two were given over to relatives at the ages of two, the third at the age of eight; one spent his childhood with four different families, another with five families; one describes his adolescence as "wandering from place to place." The psychological implications of such displacement should not be underestimated.) On occasion, two independent nuclear families—almost always connected by some kinship tie—will join together for convenience to share cooking facilities, in which case they effectively become a single extended family. And in some cases, although rare, one will encounter adult children living in independent households but handing over their income to a parent, living in still another home, who disburses the proceeds when necessary.

On the other side, it is common practice in Bang Chan now for a husband to be away for four or five months at a time earning money in Bangkok, or during the dry season on a vegetable farm, returning home to visit his wife and children whenever opportunity permits, with or without funds. The wife may still maintain their household, but often returns to live with her own parents.[1] In a similar vein, although obviously more extreme, it is not unusual to find families in Bang Chan which have simply "disintegrated," as the villagers say. Much depends here on the circumstances of family members. Bang Chaners usually reserve the term "disintegrated" for families that no longer have the economic wherewithal or justification for staying together as functioning units. In these instances, family members simply go their separate ways, if possible back to their families of orientation or to other relatives, husbands perhaps into the monkhood, and the children to whomever will take them. Most frequently, "disintegration" is characteristic of very poor families, and in the minds of

[1] This pattern may be related to the old *corvée* labor pattern when able-bodied village men were away from their families for extended periods of time.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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596 182 586 [578] [576] the villagers is contrasted with those cases of separation or divorce which are viewed as resulting more from social psychological reasons: arguments, contrariness, general incompatability, and wasting or not sharing money. The squandering of money is a most frequent cause of family discord contributing to family dissolution, especially when it involves the three aphoristic evils of Thai life: women, whiskey, and opium (although, in fact, I know of only two cases where Bang Chaners have been reputed to smoke opium).

586 595 Precise figures on the divorce or separation rate in Bang Chan are unknown, primarily because many marriages as well as divorces are never registered on the government rolls; also, many separations seem to follow an on-again-off-again pattern; the sanctioned occurrence of polygyny (only eight known cases out of the 296 families) and even polyandry (two known cases) complicates the problem even further. However, the fact that *four months* after I had designated a sample of thirty families from which to [581] select informants, six of those families, or 20 percent of the sample population, had dissolved would strongly suggest that Bang Chan families are not particularly stable.

593 586 183 The causes of family fission in these specific cases are unknown, but what is impressive is the apparent ease with which it takes place and the equanimity with which people seem to accept it. Other informants, reporting their own experiences or observations, discuss family breakups as if they were among the more normal events of the workaday world and completely understandable. They seem to be of no greater emotional import—in the sense of eliciting recognizable feelings of distress—than losing a good price on the sale of a piece of land or on the sale of some rice. In fact, the latter kinds of situations are considerably more likely to evoke expressions of hurt or exasperation. One repeatedly encounters in Bang Chan instances on the following order: a family breaks up simply because the husband has an inclination to work for a particular person whom he likes; a wife ("she is a touchy woman") runs away every time she has a minor disagreement with her husband (minor even by village standards, for example, "Should I buy my lottery tickets from Mr. X or Mr. Y?"; "Should we invite seven monks or ten monks to officiate at this ceremony?"). The point here is that these explanations—and the low tolerance for discord, the importance to a person of a boss or job over a spouse, the desire to be footloose, which they imply—are to the villagers completely reasonable justifications for the dissolution of family units.

• 174 594 596 Many of the family relationships referred to above as "centripetal" in nature are clearly related to or derived from patterns of social organization characteristic of an earlier Bang Chan. Although most evidence indicates that even in the years immediately following the settlement of the village in

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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the 1880's, the nuclear family was the primary social unit,[8] it is equally clear that extended family relations played a highly significant role—considerably more so than they do today—in the total life of the community. The precise nature of that role resists easy terminological formulation. In his reconstruction of the history of Bang Chan, L. M. Hanks (1959c) speaks of two types of "extended families" typical of early Bang Chan, one organized along lineal lines toward a single parent, and the other based on an alliance of siblings. In both cases, members of these groups assisted each other "by working in the fields, sharing food and equipment, helping with chores and celebrating special occasions together," and effectively formed what Hanks calls "extended family hamlets." These larger family units, however, were based on personal compatability, or in the case of the lineally oriented family, on the wealth and leadership of a particularly dynamic individual. They were never based on compelling structural characteristics such as corporate ownership of land or homes. Since many of the individual nuclear families were poor and trying to live off a land that was essentially a frontier, it made sense that they should join together or attach themselves to a wealthier, more powerful individual, and that the primary criterion for association should be the kinship tie with its built-in sentiments of affiliation, familiarity, and trust. However, since the basis of association here was at all times an economic-functional one—it was *reciprocal* and *mutual* benefits that brought people together, not an overriding ethic of familial solidarity—it might perhaps be better to think of such families as associations of "kindred" in the technical sense rather than

[8] Since almost all Thai history, by Thai or foreigners, is primarily a court history and concerned with activities of the kingdom at large or activities at the seat of power (where, of course, most of the literati, writers and readers, lived) there is little documentation on the history of the peasant family or any changes it might have gone through. Phya Anuman Rajadhon's profoundly knowledgeable, but highly idealized, essays on "ancient customs" of Thailand (Radjadhon ["Sathien Koset"] 1957 and Rajadhon 1954, 1958) contain references vaguely suggestive of an extended family system among peasants: "the house a groom built always had to be in the home compound of his father-in-law," for example, the time and effort demanded by house-building suggesting a high degree of permanency, the compound implying extended family unity. But the data are too meager and uneven to form the basis of anything more than speculation. On the other hand, comparative distributional data on other Thai-speaking peasants (P. K. Benedict 1943, Seidenfaden 1958); the great emphasis in traditional law, going back to the decrees of Rama Tibodi I in the mid-fourteenth century, on the absence of family responsibility in the commission of individual crime (Lingat 1936 and 1952); and the background commentary in Thailand's great multi-authored love epic of the late eighteenth–early nineteenth century, *Khun Chang and Khun Phaen*, all suggest that the peasant family has remained remarkably stable through the centuries as a nucleated, independently functioning unit linked to other families in the community by loose ties of kinship. The fact that family names did not come into use in Thailand until 1916, and then only by royal decree, further suggests that the extended family was never the major kinship unit.

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"extended families." The aim of all Bang Chan families even then was to attain a position in which they would be free from such obligations or would have other families dependent upon them.

In the intervening years the influx of new families into Bang Chan, the increased self-sufficiency of the individual nuclear families and, most important, the increased acceptance of commercial values, have served to break down kindred groups so that today few kinsmen work their fields together and even fewer share their food or equipment with one another, beyond what has been noted above. Perhaps the only remaining *universally* practiced function of the old kindred groups is the celebration of ceremonials involving members of the family, particularly cremations and ordinations, the cost and merit of which are shared among the participants, depending upon their wealth. Very often people do not want to borrow from or lend money or equipment to kinsmen precisely because the intrusion of the kinship tie makes the collection of such debts doubly awkward ("relatives take twice as long in repaying money; I do not want to lend anything to them"). However, the old forms have not been completely obliterated and when necessity requires or personal convenience moves an individual to look to others, the traditions of extended kinship, as indicated earlier, may be invoked.

For purposes of conceptual convenience, two types of kindred may be specified: the kind referred to above which involves kinsmen living in the village and to which Kaufman (1960) gives the name "spatially extended family"; and the type descriptive of relatives living outside Bang Chan, dispersed throughout other villages and provinces or in Bangkok, and called by Kaufman "the remotely extended family" and by L. M. Hanks (1959c) "the multi-local extended family." These terms are of course generic labels descriptive of actual or potential relationships between individuals, not of specifically delimited groups. Sometimes Bang Chaners attempt to extend the definition of the latter type of relationship to individuals who have never heard of them, but who may be in a position to help their son obtain a job in the city or get him admitted into a vocational school. Hanks has shown how the multi-local extended family has to a limited extent in recent years rejuvenated extended kinship ties by becoming the major institutional mechanism through which villagers leave Bang Chan to seek their fortunes elsewhere. (This last phrase is not merely a figure of speech; many young Bang Chan men have what could be called almost a Dick Whittington view about leaving Bang Chan for Bangkok.) A cousin who undertakes to serve as a villager's liaison to a city job or who offers him a place to stay usually does so willingly, for it creates obligations which may be called upon later if need be.

The above description of variations and extensions has been presented

361 direction dividing it into two halves, the Bangchan half
312 consisting of BC4, BC5, BC6, and the Kannayao half consistingoof KY5, KY6, KY7 and KY8.

621 As mentioned earlier, our functional Bangchan village
634 is under two different administrative authorities, the Bangchan half consisting of part of Tambol Bangchan which is in turn part of Amphur Minburi in Changwad Phra-nakorn (Bangkok) and the Kannayao half consisting of part of Tambol Kannayao which is part of Amphur Bangkapi in the same Changwad Phra-nakorn.

History of Settlement

• 174 No official records on the history of the settlement
361 of Bangchan could be discovered, but evidence from genealo-
[503] gies provides a few clues on the subject. Following the digging of Saensaeb Canal some one hundred and twenty years ago, settlement was made along the banks of this important canal which provides one of the few connections between the
175 Menam and Bangprakong rivers. It was not, however, until
621 the 1870's, apparently, that people found it necessary to
361 move onto the land away from the canal. At that time, according to one of our older informants, her father was born in what is now Bangchan, his father and mother having come out from Bangkok as a young married couple to take up farm-
175 ing where plenty of land was available from the Crown. These
621 people and their followers, usually kinfolk or friends, cleared off scrub jungle areas in which, it is claimed, tigers and